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EDUCATIONAL WRITINGS

Several plans for the grading of teachers have been elaborated in which the effort is made to give in great detail all of the characteristics which contribute in any essential way to success in the classroom. The practical use of these grading systems is for the most part prevented by their complexity. The ordinary superintendent does not feel that he has the time or the knowledge necessary to a careful rating of each teacher on his staff, and the actual outcomes of such efforts as have been made to rate teachers under these systems present so many inconsistencies that school men are reluctant to take them up. The problem is for the time being, therefore, in what may be called the investigational stage.

Mr. Boyce has made a vigorous attack on the problem.¹ He elaborated a scorecard covering the five matters of personal equipment, social and professional equipment, school management, technique of teaching, and results of teaching. He then secured a large number of ratings and carefully analyzed the results.

It appears that the ratings on personal and general characteristics are vague. The evaluation of management and teaching is more definite and the estimation of results is again not independent of the estimate formed in the two preceding matters.

The study will be helpful to a superintendent or principal even if he does not use the whole card. It is suggestive, in the first place, in that it calls attention to the characteristics which a teacher ought to possess, and, in the second place, because it gives some idea based on careful study of the extent to which these characteristics should be considered in rating a teacher.

The telling of stories is an ancient educational device. To some extent every successful teacher knows and practices the art.

¹ "Methods for Measuring Teachers' Efficiency." Part II of the *Fourteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1915. Pp. 83.

Of late there has been something of a revival of story-telling as an explicit and conscious form of school exercise. In a volume which has just appeared¹ a comprehensive summary is given of the material available for such exercises.

The book is perhaps most useful for the bibliography of stories which is printed in the appendix. Here the teacher can find the titles of most of the books on story-telling and many of the books of stories for children.

The book also sets forth in some detail the device of turning bottles into puppets which may be used in dramatizing stories. The bottle people, as they are called, are easily made by children and they have certain obvious advantages in personal stability over most dolls. They are described as taking on certain fixed characteristics so that they serve quite as do the puppets in a real show to arouse expectation of typical reactions. The device sounds most captivating and ought to furnish many a child with the means of expressing his desire for dramatization.

The book also contains some arguments in support of the educational value of story-telling and some directions as to how to do it. The stories are classified so that the teacher will be guided in the selection of material. The publishers are so enthusiastic about these various features that they have inserted in place of the preface a modest note setting forth the virtues of the book in the following terms:

It is the most comprehensive book that has been written. It covers all the aspects of the subject: the value of stories; the kind of stories children like at different ages; devices for making stories effective; picture stories; dramatized stories; the relation of stories to play; the use of stories in building character; stories in the home, the school, and the church; professional story-telling, etc.

One is tempted to remark in a critical way on part of this program, but perhaps it is best to treat it as the outbursts of family enthusiasm on the appearance of a new member. Or, to change the figure, we may pass much of this as the unrestrained remarks of a specialist. The only warning that perhaps ought to be sounded

¹ *Manual of Stories*. By William Byron Forbush. Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co., 1915. Pp. 310.

is that the school which devotes most of its energy to story-telling is likely to build up character less than the school which has recitations in due form.

Three contributions to the educational organization of play have come to hand during the month. The first is a recreation survey of Ipswich, Massachusetts.¹ Mr. Knight watched the children of that city to see what they actually do after school. Out of 696 who were observed, 262 were merely idling. Of the total number, 233 boys and 197 girls were spending the two hours immediately after school on the street. These facts—which can doubtless be paralleled in any similar community in the country—make a strong appeal for better organization of recreational facilities. Mr. Knight has given an interesting example of the way in which present opportunities can be understood and new opportunities added. There must be someone in every city who will take the responsibility of organizing recreation. It seems natural for the school to assume a part at least of this duty. On the other hand, the cost of the enterprise and the importance of bringing into the recreational centers not only the children but also adults give school officers pause. They are so much absorbed in properly organizing the school hours that they sometimes despair of organizing the whole life of the children. Mr. Knight has shown one way of dealing with the perplexing situation. Let school people at least make to the community a clear statement of present conditions and a strong appeal for improvement. A survey is a wholesome means of educating the public and a legitimate means of discharging a part at least of the school's obligation by placing the responsibility on the whole city.

But a survey and a plan are not enough, even though the school is primarily concerned with the regular school hours. The life of pupils out of school hours has too important a bearing on the life of these same pupils in school to be left to chance. Plans for organizing play will therefore always be read with interest.

¹ *Play and Recreation in a Town of 6,000*. By Howard R. Knight. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1915. Pp. 98.

Principal F. J. Reilly, of School No. 33 of the Bronx, New York City, has given an account of the way in which the boys of several New York schools have been interested in organized play.¹ In this book there is presented an argument for a system which shall stimulate every boy in the school to improve on his own physical record. To this end there ought to be a record and there ought to be a systematic series of exercises which will help every boy to improve himself. The book tells that there is a cross-bar in every door in the school to which any boy may go and chin himself whenever he can do so without disturbing his work or that of others. Shades of our forefathers! Can anyone picture cross-bars for chinning one's self in the doors of the Boston Latin School?

Mr. Reilly tells not only how the boys are provided with opportunity, but also of results. He gives a brief chapter on the extension of the experiment to girls. All this he does with an enthusiasm which shows that one who has seen the experiment is sure to become a propagandist.

Still more comprehensive is the book by Mr. Henry S. Curtis, that copious writer and lecturer on play.² Mr. Curtis has here brought together a series of concrete examples illustrating how the play movement has been organized and much definite advice and direction as to the forms which it may advantageously take.

Some years ago Mr. Foght was sent to Denmark by the Bureau of Education to make a study of the rural schools which have been so influential in changing the economic and social conditions of that state. He found much that absorbed his attention and seemed to him worthy of imitation in this country. Three bulletins of the Bureau have made various aspects of the situation known to school officers and the interest has been great enough to justify the publication of a volume reviewing the whole situation.³

¹ *Rational Athletics for Boys*. By F. J. Reilly. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1915. Pp. 125.

² *The Practical Conduct of Play*. By Henry S. Curtis. New York: Macmillan, 1915. Pp. 330.

³ *Rural Denmark and Its Schools*. By Harold W. Foght. New York: Macmillan, 1915. Pp. 355.

The book discusses the general material and social background of the schools, then gives an account of the elementary rural schools, and finally describes the special agricultural schools and the folk high schools in which the whole community life is made to center. One gets from these descriptions a vivid notion of a thrifty, cultivated people who have learned, not only how to make their farms produce, but also how to live. The various chapters give the courses of study, the methods of organization, and a full statement of the social activities which extend the school beyond the strictly academic work.

When one begins to discuss the possibility of doing the same sort of thing in the United States, he finds difficulties. Mr. Foght would not advocate a wholesale effort to imitate, for the national characteristics of our people are different from those of the Danes. But he argues with vigor for an intelligent borrowing of much that the Danes have done and he makes a case which seems very strong.

Perhaps the most impressive difference between Denmark and this country is to be found in the fact that our people are not driven by sheer necessity to consider ways and means of improving rural conditions. With the great diversity of our industries and social opportunities there is a strong temptation to lay emphasis on other industries and other modes of life than those of the farmer. In many rural American communities the progressive individuals are abandoning the farm, while in Denmark the state is so small and its resources so limited that there is no alternative, if comfort is to be produced at all, but to improve rural conditions. This fact makes it all the more important that we should have examples of successful reorganization of rural life brought to our attention. If necessity is absent, intelligence should carry us in the direction of improvement. Mr. Foght's book will help the movement, which is well under way in this country, to make rural life better and more productive.

The appearance of a second edition¹ of Professor Dewey's well-known book, *School and Society*, gives an opportunity to

¹ *The School and Society*. By John Dewey. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1915. Pp. 164.

comment on the influence of the earlier edition of this book and calls for a description of the changes which the author has thought it wise to introduce in the new edition.

When Professor Dewey brought out the first edition of *School and Society*, in 1899, he found a very eager audience for the doctrines of innovation which he had to teach. From a broad sociological and ethical point of view Dewey called attention to radical economic changes which have been going on in society and outlined the corresponding changes which must be made in the organization and course of study of the schools. He called attention, in his second chapter, to the necessity of making all of these changes with due recognition of the child's intellectual and physical and moral nature. In the third chapter he pointed out the fact that our present school organization is very defective because of its failure to bring together the different educational agencies in any unified way. In the earlier edition, the fourth chapter contained a sketch of the history of the laboratory school which Dewey founded. The questions that were to be investigated by that school were outlined, and one derived a clear understanding from that chapter of the reason why Dewey called his school a laboratory school. Furthermore, the questions raised by Dewey made it evident even to the inexperienced reader that educational experimentation is very much needed in order to improve both the method of instruction and the organization of the curriculum. In the present edition the author has seen fit to omit this fourth chapter. Those who are familiar with the earlier edition will feel that there is a distinct loss in omitting this discussion of the important experiment which Professor Dewey inaugurated.

As a substitute for the fourth chapter of the earlier edition we now have a series of chapters which are reprints of articles published by Professor Dewey in the *Elementary School Record*. There are discussions of the psychology of elementary education, of Froebel's principles of education, of the psychology of occupations, of the development of attention, and of the aim of history in elementary education. In a certain sense, these somewhat more abstract discussions of educational principles cover the same ground that was covered in the statement about the experimental

school, but one feels the loss of the more definite personal tone which characterized the earlier book.

The present form of the volume is, perhaps, more useful as a general textbook than was the earlier form. Certainly the reprinting of those discussions from the *Elementary School Record* will make them more accessible to a wider range of readers, and the book now stands as a clear statement of the principles which have exercised a broadening influence in American and English education and have been widely accepted since their author enunciated them. In the author's prefatory note to the second edition there is a comment which expresses the situation better than it can be expressed in any other way: "The writer may perhaps be permitted a word to express his satisfaction that the educational point of view presented in this book is not so novel as it was fifteen years ago; and his desire to believe that the educational experiment of which the book is an outgrowth has not been without influence in the change."

Certainly Professor Dewey may rest assured of the very great influence of his book. It is given only to a few men to write educational classics. Since Spencer wrote his essays there has not been a more important contribution to educational reform than Dewey's *School and Society*.

For some years past the faculty of the Francis W. Parker School has issued a yearbook, describing some phase of the work of that school which seems to them to be of the greatest significance. A fourth volume¹ of this yearbook has just appeared and the authors have supplied the following review of its purposes and contents:

This volume, prepared by the faculty of the Francis W. Parker School, Chicago, deals with "Education through Concrete Experience—A Series of Illustrations." It is a distinctive contribution to literature on education, and presents in a variety of phases the work which has been carried out in this school. Those who have read Vols. I, II, and III will welcome the present volume. Those interested in the vocational aspects of education will find the book particularly helpful.

The importance of providing adequate concrete experience and imagery as the basis of all school work, of motivating the work by relating it to the

¹ *Francis W. Parker School Year Book*, Volume IV, June, 1915. Chicago: Published by the School. Pp. 186.

actual needs and occupations of the children, and of carrying over the knowledge gained into purposeful activities, cannot be too strongly emphasized. The absence of opportunities in the average school for children to turn what they are learning to immediate practical use is largely responsible for their dislike of school work and their desire to leave it for more interesting fields.

The present volume contains illustrated articles on "Mental Imagery in Geography," "The Pupil's Experience as the Source of His Problems in Arithmetic," "Experience-Building in the Teaching of Geometry," "Points of Contact of English with School Activities," "How Dramatization of Stories Helps in Teaching Modern Languages," "School Heating and Ventilation—A Study in Applied Physics," "Some Laboratory Experiments Involving Real Chemical Problems," "The Study of an Industry," "A Study of Foods and Food Supply," "Excursions," and several other articles relating to both elementary- and high-school teaching.

The Manual Arts Press has done much to assist teachers in working out the details of manual-training courses. Such courses require devices and material that are not always easy to produce in the shop itself. A new folder¹ has just appeared in which are given a number of definite working drawings for simple objects that can be constructed in the workshop. There are working drawings for a fern stand, a farm gate, a reading-lamp, etc. In each case reference is made to the *Manual Training Journal* published by the same press in which the problem and design are discussed. These working drawings are on thin, oiled paper, ready to be used for making blue-prints. The teacher is thus supplied with a ready means of introducing students to the methods of the constructive shop.

Professor Kirkpatrick has found a new and very interesting field for systematic education.² As he points out in the preface, all children are called on to assume certain grave personal and social responsibilities in connection with the use of money, but nowhere is there a school which thinks this subject one of enough importance to make it a topic of serious treatment. Indeed, the case is even worse, for the school usually treats of money under the head of

¹ *Shop Problems, 1914-15*. Edited by Albert F. Siepert. Peoria, Ill.: Manual Arts Press.

² *The Use of Money*. By E. A. Kirkpatrick. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co. Pp. 226.

number problems and thinks of the child as adequately trained in the idea of money because he can make change or count.

The fact is that money is a social institution. Through its use the child is introduced to the broad organizations of civilization. In concrete ways in family life he must appreciate his responsibilities and the use of money in setting up these responsibilities.

Professor Kirkpatrick has prepared a series of studies which will interest parents as well as teachers. He writes on "Spending Money," "Saving Money," "Buying Clothes," "Keeping Accounts," and numerous other topics which serve to illustrate his fundamental idea.

The Division of Reference and Research of the New York Schools is one of the nine bureaus of efficiency that have been organized in school systems of the United States for the purpose of applying scientific methods to educational problems. Publication No. 6¹ of this bureau is a pamphlet of 75 pages giving in detail nearly all of the standard tests and scales. In the words of the introduction:

A demand has arisen for a manual that should contain all the tests and standards that have been formulated up to the present time. This demand the 1915 *Year Book* attempts to satisfy. This issue contains tests in Arithmetic, English, including composition, reading, dictation, and spelling, Handwriting, Geography, and Drawing, that have been devised for the purpose of measuring the products of the educational process. The value of such tests for teachers and supervisors may be briefly summarized:

Teachers may employ standardized tests for the purpose of determining the needs and progress of their pupils. They can judge the efficiency of the methods employed. They are in a position to rate their own work, as to its success in the completion of a definite task set before them, not by their supervisors, but by the capabilities of the children before them. When teachers are acquainted with the standard scores for the grade in any subject, they are able to determine whether they are attaining the standards proposed. Furthermore, teachers are able to diagnose the weaknesses of the class, localize the problems, and adopt ways and means for their solution.

By the use of standardized tests, supervisory officials are in a position to analyze conditions in a school or system of schools. They are able to make

¹ *Teachers' Year Book of Educational Investigations*. Edited by Isidore Springer. Issued by the Division of Reference and Research, Department of Education, The City of New York, 1915.

supervision more effective. Aims are made definite. Supervisors are in a position to know in what particulars teachers are weak, and where they need strengthening. Comparison with schools in similar social environments becomes possible.

Many of the tests set forth in this manual are tentative. The claim has nowhere been made that the final form of the tests has been determined. Revision of the tests which will meet the various objections to them will no doubt be made as the result of many experiments and investigations.

The danger of relying on these tests is pointed out in the last paragraph of the quotation. Unfortunately many teachers and supervisors who have of late been making use of these scales have not realized that back of each standard there is a body of principles which constantly need to be applied in new ways to individual children.

Some of the principals of elementary schools in St. Louis, for example, have issued a St. Louis writing scale. They have doubtless learned more in the process of making the scale than they could have by merely applying the work of others to their schools. They profit by getting at the principles and mastering these underlying considerations.

The importance of reading as a part of the school program is easy to demonstrate by an appeal to any elementary-school program. A handbook of devices for teaching reading is therefore always welcome. Miss Jenkins has given in her monograph¹ some excellent suggestions worked out in much detail for the conduct of reading lessons in the lower grades. She has also included in her discussions some of the results of psychological studies. The handling of this scientific material is hardly to be described as satisfactory, but it calls attention to the fact that there are studies of reading which ought ultimately to illuminate the teacher's task by showing what is going on in children's minds when they are beginning to use printed and written words.

The book emphasizes throughout the importance of thought-getting and suggests methods of inducing and testing thought-processes. The paragraphs in which the suggestion is made that

¹ *Reading in the Primary Grades*. By Frances Jenkins. Riverside Educational Monographs. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915. Pp. 125.

children ought by their intonation to demonstrate their appreciation of the situation referred to in the text are not unlikely to mislead some. There is nothing so artificial as the effort of a child to express anger, for example, in his intonation when he is reading about an angry man. The fact is the child ought not to express anger in such a case. The true attitude of the reader in such a case differs radically from the attitude of the person described.

In treating of scientific methods of drill and testing, the author makes some excellent suggestions as to the way in which this testing should be carried out. She does not, however, complete the discussion. What should a teacher do with the results of such tests? There is no greater danger at the present time than that which grows out of the collection of scientific material which is not used. Teachers are urged to make tests and they are very willing to do so, and then they are confronted with the fact that the results are very difficult to turn into productive practice. No one ought to recommend tests unless he can at the same time tell how to use results in modifying and improving practice.

Finally, it may be noted that this book, like many another on reading, comments somewhat vaguely on the distinction between oral and silent reading. There can be no doubt that a psychological analysis of the reading process shows very clearly the importance of silent reading. Methods are, however, very difficult to develop and tests are obscure. Furthermore, it is not evident that silent reading can be successfully introduced in the lower grades. The distinction gets in this book little attention after it is made.

The book will draw the attention of teachers to many important and interesting problems in spite of the difficulties which have been pointed out. As a book of devices it is very suggestive.